



# *This Old Column*

*July, 2001*

## **Understanding the Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation**

The Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation are used nation-wide by preservation professionals as well others who want sound preservation guidance in planning the rehabilitation of an historic building. The IHPC uses the standards in preparing guidelines for its historic districts, and in staff recommendations for Certificate of Appropriateness applications.

The Standards were initially developed in 1976 to guide appropriate work on historic properties. They emphasize repair over replacement to ensure the preservation of character-defining qualities, while accommodating reasonable change for new uses.

Key points to remember:

- Preserve historic materials
- Preserve distinctive features
- Preserve important interior spaces
- Additions should be compatible with the size, scale, color, material, and character of the historic building, yet differentiated so that the old and new are not confused.

Rehabilitation is defined as the process of returning a property to a state of utility, through repair or alteration, which makes possible an efficient contemporary use while preserving those portions and features of the property which are significant to its historic, architectural, and cultural values.

The ten standards are:

1. A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships.

2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.
3. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.
4. Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.
8. Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work will be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

For more information concerning the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, please visit the National Park Service website at [www2.cr.nps.gov](http://www2.cr.nps.gov).